



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

<https://archive.org/details/b21473882>

SEPARATION WITHOUT DISSENSION.



OBSERVATIONS

ADDRESSED TO

GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

ON THE BEST MEANS OF

MAINTAINING THEIR PRIVILEGES AND RESPECTABILITY.

BY

WILLIAM COOKE,

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, SECRETARY TO THE HUNTERIAN SOCIETY, EDITOR OF AN ABRIDGMENT OF MORGAGNI, &c. &c.

Nam, tua res agitur paries cum proximus ardet.—HOR.

—

LONDON:

PRINTED BY TEAPE AND SON, TOWER-HILL:

PUBLISHED BY LONGMAN, REES, AND CO. PATERNOSTER ROW; AND RENSHAW AND RUSH, 356, STRAND.

1831.

Price Eighteen Pence.

P R E F A C E.

THE following observations formed the sequel of a pamphlet issued a few years ago on a subject of temporary interest. A few copies have remained in my possession, and as there never was a more critical period in the history of the General Practitioner than the present, I have ventured to detach this part of the work in the hope that its circulation will be beneficial. The General Praetitioner, before he obtains authority to practise, is now required to present evidence of a liberal education, and must produce testimonials of a very extended process of scientific and professional instruction. This, however, alone will not secure to him the public confidence. The habits of the young medical man are more closely scrutinized than those of other young men entering upon life, and confidence will be long withheld from him—especially in the department that identifies him so closely with family affairs—if his deportment be not in accordance with his professional requirement, and not tending to the progressive increase of his knowledge.

Various schemes have been proposed to place the General Practitioner in a new position as it regards other departments of the faculty. Some of these plans do not comport with the dignity of a liberal and enlightened profession. They involve means which impede rather than promote success—and which, were they to prove successful, would leave a blot on the reputation for which the advantages obtained would afford no adequate equivalent.

One chimerical suggestion—of uniting the different orders of the profession into one class—with, indeed, some broad lines of division—has the sanction of a name that gives weight to the proposition ;—and it is sent forth endorsed with a title well adapted to secure its acceptance. The author may have the credit of good intention, but as it bears on the General Practitioner (whose mental resources he does not duly appreciate) we are reminded of the trite anecdote of the man, who, being officious and troublesome to a commander and his crew during a tempest, was directed to hold a rope with all his might lest the vessel should be

lost. The officers were relieved from the man's interference, and his self-importance was gratified, whilst in reality he had stood a cipher. With such differences of opinion as exist in the higher as well as lower departments, we are compelled to say with Horace,

— ut nec pes, nec caput uni
Reddatur formæ.

It would greatly derogate from the interests of General Practitioners if they accepted of any concession (and some is undoubtedly due to them) that did not recognize an elevation of rank commensurate with their elevation of professional character. I am no advocate of a levelling system, and yet I think it both conducive to the advancement of medical philosophy, and congenial with the spirit of the times, that a door should be open to talent though it may have germinated among the rubbish of pharmacy and obstetrics.

It must, however, be remembered that as it relates to the public, and this is by far the most important consideration, legislation will effect little or nothing except as it affords a security against incompetence. The practical application of knowledge and skill, so as to ensure confidence—to establish reputation—and to diffuse the inestimable blessings of the healing art, must rest with ourselves.

The following pages were hastily written, under a powerful conviction that if the impetus given to the qualification of the General Practitioner be not expended in fruitless disputation—or diverted by jealousy—or neutralized by habits that degrade professional men—he will continue to hold a station in society of immense usefulness, and of high esteem.

I feel it only necessary to add, with respect to the mode of remuneration alluded to, (page 84) that I have long since *wholly* abandoned the practice of compensation by medicine, and consider its abandonment essential to the stability of practitioners, who may feel it right, both on their own account and for the welfare of the sick, to dispense as well as to prescribe.

39, TRINITY SQUARE,
August 12, 1831.

ON GENERAL PRACTICE.

IN offering a few remarks on this subject, I shall take it for granted, whatever might be said in favor of the division of labour, that it is for the good of society that medicine, surgery, and midwifery, should continue to be practised in combination.

Among the respective departments of medical labour, those who embrace these united objects, are far more numerous than those who fulfil the duties of an individual line; and I think it would not be difficult to prove, viewing their more extended connexion with society, that they have the means of being as pre-eminent in utility as they exceed in number. In making this bold assertion, it is pre-supposed that all the measures placed at their command for acquiring competency of knowledge, are legitimately used; for if they are not, the argument cannot be sustained. If there be inadequacy, the extent of the relation to society proportionably increases the evil. The individual who engages in medical practice, undertakes an office of the utmost responsibility—Involving interests the most complicated and momentous. His duties do not

merely consist in the treatment of disease, though this, perhaps, may be viewed as his first and highest duty. He has often to sooth and satisfy anxiety where no disease exists. He should be moderately well acquainted with mental and moral philosophy; for many circumstances under which he is appealed to, call upon him for the exercise of some practical wisdom in the management of phenomena little subject to medical treatment. He is often referred to as a public officer, to decide points of vast importance in relation to individuals or to the community; and in the discharge of his private and public functions, it is no small advantage for him to be capable of perspicuous representation. It is not every man, however eminent his attainments in knowledge may be, whose powers of description are clear enough to satisfy an intelligent mind, or to bear the scrutiny of a legal court. Then, too, surgery presents us with an appalling catalogue of diseases and injuries which demand the most prompt and skilful interposition:—and, regular as generally are the operations of nature, the engagements of an accoucheur demand extensive knowledge, unwearied patience, and tender sympathy—combined with great decision of character, and the utmost degree of self-possession. We need not be discouraged, however, by this formidable

though not overdrawn representation ; for extensive as the qualifications of an efficient General Practitioner must be, it is possible for him, in each department, to attain an eminence well deserving of public confidence. It must, however, be evident that the gaining of this competency demands no common exertion, and the period has arrived when it is incumbent on those who embrace the general objects of medical and surgical practice, to consider how they are likely to stand in the estimation of a community rapidly advancing in intellectual attainment. People are not now contented with acquiring enlarged views of their own occupations, but whilst bestowing unprecedented care in the cultivation of their peculiar allotments, they are disposed to glance on their neighbours', and many have become very expert in detecting their imperfections. The medical, in common with other sciences, has attracted popular attention ; and I hope the scrutiny to which we are submitted will have a tendency to eradicate all dishonorable practices, to which some have resorted as a substitute for patient study and persevering industry. Appealing to the restless passion for novelty, which still exerts so much influence on the public, taking unfair advantage of their inability to appreciate suggestions for the relief of human suffering, and finding a *pabulum*

in vulgar credulity, many new and useless schemes have been promulgated, withdrawing, for a while, the confidence of the afflicted from their only safe resource for succour. However, allowing these evils their greatest weight, it may justly be maintained that there never was a period when the members of the medical profession were actuated by better sentiments than in the present day. The regulations which have been adopted by the Court of the Royal College of Surgeons, and by that of the Society of Apothecaries, as to the education and qualification of their respective members, have not only secured greater extent of elementary knowledge, but have inspired the surgeon and apothecary with unprecedented zeal for the cultivation of the art; and following up their early advantages with a course of subsequent observation and research, much greater efficiency for duty has been obtained. But, notwithstanding these auspicious circumstances, there are points regarding the general practitioner which demand his most serious consideration. The number of individuals engaged in medical pursuits, as, indeed, in those of other professions, has of late very rapidly increased. Without the least intention to impute unworthy motives to men occupied in other departments, the general practitioner cannot be insensible to the encroachments

likely to be made upon him by the overwhelming augmentation of physicians and pure surgeons. Every man, who engages in professional duty, reasonably expects to obtain a respectable subsistence: and where the ground had been pretty fully occupied before, we cannot wonder if the physician or surgeon be tempted to descend a little both in fees and habits from the high rank and dignified respectability of his established contemporaries; so that by gleaning from the upper classes of society, and by yielding to the condition of the lower, he gradually insinuates himself into practice. This, however, is a course which cannot fail to engender some hostile feelings among his brethren, and will ultimately militate against the general interests of the profession, without conduced to the good of the community.* Advancing intelligence and efficiency in one class, and of growing numbers in both, will necessarily tend, without much caution, to excite a spirit of rivalry which will detract from the estimation in which they are both held by a sagacious and discerning people. No one

* We have heard that there are physicians and surgeons who not only prescribe and attend for half the ordinary fees, but who, whilst professing to despise the pharmaceutical art, enter into a compact with a neighbouring chemist and druggist and participate in his profits. This, however, is a subterfuge to which an ingenuous mind will not resort.

can entertain higher respect for the erudition and talent of both physicians and surgeons than myself, nor has any one greater occasion to attest the generosity of their deportment towards the general practitioner. That exceptions should exist amidst the imperfections of human nature ought not to surprise us ; but if those exceptions are numerous, it conduces to the good of the whole to bring them under animadversion.

The physician and surgeon have no warrant when called in consultation with brethren inferior to themselves, perhaps, only in rank, to maintain an air of supercilious and studied distance—nor by any inuendo to impair the confidence in the family attendant—nor by any extraneous attentions to aim to supplant him, any more than the general practitioner would be justified in an effort to withhold from gentlemen, whose aid he has solicited, the award which may be fairly due to the exercise of superior skill. It does not, however, fall beneath the intention of the present address, to intermeddle with any interests except those of the surgeon-apothecary ; nevertheless they are so interwoven with the other departments in practice, that it was impossible wholly to disunite them.

Sometimes we are embarrassed in appreciating the distinctions which the various titles

we sustain convey, and of which distinctions some amongst us are exceedingly tenacious. We are often at a loss in ascertaining where to draw the line between the physician and surgeon, and between the *pure* and *medical* surgeon; but the public do not encounter equal difficulty. A man feels that he has a malady, with the name and nature of which he is wholly unacquainted. He hears of, or knows an individual who stands in good repute, but whether he be a physician or surgeon, whether he be a fellow or a licentiate of London, or a diplomatist of Aberdeen, gives him no concern, (and certainly need give him none) so that he find a remedy for his disease. He perceives too, that his disregard of titles does not in the least inconvenience him, for, if cutting instruments are not required, few physicians object to undertaking the management of a surgical case. And I believe it is undeniable, that by far the majority of cases, which, in private engagements, pass under the observation of the pure surgeon, demand the adoption of medical treatment; so that the principal difference between him and the general practitioner is, that the latter dispenses his own medicine, and usually acts as an accoucheur.

If the surgeon-apothecary associate the business of a chemist and druggist with his medical occupation, his extra - professional

machinery becomes so complicated as to occasion such a diversion of the mind from professional studies as must inevitably detract from his efficiency. Should he also conjoin the dispensing of quack - medicine and perfumery, a circumstance not very unfrequently observed, he is not only disabled for the duties which he avows himself competent to undertake, but he allows an alienation of professional and honorable feeling. Such an individual can neither expect to stand well in the estimation of his brethren, nor to rise high in the confidence of his intelligent neighbours.

Conceding every thing that is due to the general learning and distinguished ability of physicians and surgeons, yet if we estimate the value of any occupation according to its adaptation to the ordinary wants of mankind, it must be admitted that the general practitioner has the means of the most extended usefulness, provided he employ those means in the most effectual manner.

No man, however, can expect to rise above mediocrity who does not devote all his energies to the duties of his profession. Occasional seasons of recreation will not be incompatible with the surrender of himself to pursuits or to trains of thought which either directly or meditately bear on the alleviation of human suffering. Nothing can afford, to a well-

disposed mind, so powerful an incentive to exertion, as the due impression of the extent of its responsibility, and a full consciousness of its opportunities of doing good. I have already adverted, though in very inadequate terms, to the extent of our responsibility, from which a mind duly susceptible would shrink, were it not supported by the assurance that no means had been wilfully neglected of gaining all the knowledge which could be put in requisition.

Numerous benefits undoubtedly arise from the division of labour, but these advantages are not without their attendant disadvantages; and this is peculiarly the case in the practice of medicine. In demonstrating this, we need only advert to the constitutional origin of topical diseases; and the reverse of this, the local origin of many constitutional derangements. Affections strictly surgical so often merge into disorders which demand medical treatment, that it is impossible wholly to disjoin them, and to define the termination of one and the commencement of the other. How often are physicians called to witness attacks which demand the immediate use of the lancet, but before it can be employed a surgeon must be summoned, often at considerable loss of time! Many serious diseases are allowed to go on without efficient management, because the

examination requisite to disclose the precise condition of the patient was rather of a surgical than of a medical nature ! If we can but secure a clear understanding—deep and extensive information of the general principles of medical and surgical science—and accuracy of discrimination, it will not detract from the efficiency of the executive, that it centre in the same person, that individual having every expedient for the relief of the sufferer at his immediate command. Still the accountability he undertakes is a very serious one, and were it not that the same fundamental principles must guide us in each department, the individual who combines the whole, would require an unattainable comprehensiveness and versatility of talent.

It is, however, an encouraging fact, that the possibility of obtaining great distinction, even in general practice, has been occasionally demonstrated. A conscientious man will not satisfy himself, in the performance of his important duties, that in the season of emergency he can solicit the aid of others, by whose greater skill his own deficiencies might be supplied. In general, the period when disease is most under control is its early development ; and if our treatment be inefficient then, the mischief might be irreparable. The practitioner, indeed, may shield himself from censure, but

the mind that can be contented with escaping reproach, when by his ignorance he has been accessory to the mutilation, or irremediable suffering, or death of a fellow creature, must be destitute of humane and honorable feeling. It is true that, with every possible acquirement and after the most enlarged experience, errors of judgment will be sometimes committed; but the want of absolute certainty in the application of the mental powers forms no pretext or apology for the great culpability of neglecting their cultivation.

We ought not to overlook the fact, that, in departments requiring operations of a very delicate nature, great manual dexterity has been acquired by persons who have devoted themselves rather closely to that particular branch; but it has not generally resulted that the science itself has been promoted by exclusive application of the mind. Where considerable improvements have taken place, they have usually been effected by men who may have cultivated one branch in connexion with attentive observation and extensive practice in other departments of labour, or who had previously allowed themselves to range freely through the whole field of medical and surgical science.

The comparison of the respective claims of different classes of men to public regard would

involve us in a discussion equally unpleasant and unprofitable. Our physicians and surgeons are deserving of the highest respect, and the general practitioner would very properly retire from competition with them if it were only on the ground of their higher rank. Sometimes, however, this courtesy has been carried too far, and has tended to disparage themselves in the estimation of the public. The deference due to the opinions of superior and able men must be distinguished from the abject submission sometimes demanded where there exists no other than a nominal superiority. Genuine talent is unassuming, and men of the highest cultivation and discernment are usually found the most affable and kind in their counsels. On various points of frequent occurrence, the general practitioner will gladly avail himself of a second opinion; and he certainly cannot do better than solicit the aid of an able physician or hospital surgeon, according to the nature of the case. In many parts of the country a general practitioner, a man of intelligence and of ample experience, often becomes the consulting physician and surgeon to a wide circle of his brethren; and I believe is as little disposed to take undue advantage of the confidence reposed in him as the most enlightened men of higher rank. We should do honor to ourselves, and raise

our department of labour in public estimation, by cherishing mutual confidence more extensively. Physicians themselves often derive satisfaction from consultation with their brethren; and the assurance that the most efficient measures were adopted to avert the consequences of disease, is no slight relief to the feelings of surviving friends. Whatever might be the consequence to ourselves, the peculiarly interesting trust reposed in us demands the most inflexible regard to integrity and candour in the performance of our duties. Nothing is more unworthy of a professional man than to exaggerate the danger attendant on disease, for the purpose of ensuring additional merit in relieving it; nor is any thing more unmanly than to disguise danger, from an apprehension that another practitioner would be consulted. The delinquency in both cases may be the same, though the consequences in the latter instance, would be by far the most lamentable.

There is an ostentation about the attendance of two medical men, as well as a partial exoneration from responsibility, to which the conduct of some individuals rather indicates a fondness; but if a general practitioner appear habitually to distrust himself, he must not wonder if he be distrusted by others. In deference, too, to the feelings of patients and their friends, it is desirable to avoid needless

attendance, for when multiplied, it never fails to excite apprehensions of considerable peril which, probably, might have no existence. However, the evils arising from this source are much less deplorable than those which originate in neglecting that advice, which, if it had not really been beneficial to the patient, might have soothed the agony of deeply afflicted survivors. We have known individuals who have rather exulted in not calling in physicians, except when the fate of the patient was inevitable :—the sentiment conveyed by such expressions, shows a dereliction of principle towards the patient, and is extremely unjust towards the physician. If any discredit attend the issue, he participates in it—or the whole of the odium is cast upon him—though he was withheld from the opportunity of averting the catastrophe.

Whilst considering the important influence exerted on the mind of the patient, by the professional attendance, we must not be indifferent to the effects produced by the habits of the individual practitioner. Were I to dwell on the inconsiderateness, indeed it might be justly termed cruelty, of chiefly occupying the time of a visit, in a case of serious indisposition, in extraneous conversation, it would be deemed trifling and superfluous ; and yet from observations frequently made by patients, I doubt

whether it does not occur sufficiently often to render it deserving of exposure and reprobation. The frequency of visits has some influence on the comfort and recovery of the sick. Whilst they should be sufficiently frequent to meet every real exigency, and to satisfy the solicitude of friends ; yet, if unnecessarily repeated, they excite the expectation of a crisis, for which there might be no warrant. I have known anxiety and watchfulness kept up in this way, by an over-solicitous attendant, to a pitch of intensity for which there was not the least occasion.

The individual who enters on general practice, certainly engages in no sinecure ; and if he estimate correctly the seriousness of the obligations he undertakes, he will feel it incumbent upon him to pursue a course of unwearied assiduity. But, if he have had the advantage of a good early education—if he have spent his years of professional initiation under favorable guidance, and have completed his preliminary studies creditably— if he embark in practice with ardent feelings, and cultivate the habit of close observation and well-directed study, he undoubtedly has a fair opportunity of becoming most extensively useful.

It cannot be denied that many and great advantages, of a collateral nature, are derived from collegiate studies ; nevertheless, whilst

explicitly admitting this, I affirm that we limit our energies unwarrantably, and do ourselves injustice, if we entertain the notion that the highest acquisitions of professional knowledge are not attainable to men who walk in the more humble ranks. This observation might be confirmed by mentioning the names of many who have been in general practice, but who now do honor to a more elevated order. It has been illiberally insinuated, that an individual who had been accustomed to pharmaceutical duties, could not directly emerge from his low occupations, without carrying with him some traits of a grovelling nature ; but the examples just alluded to, falsify and refute the imputation. I would not willingly indulge in recrimination, nor engage in controversy with an anonymous and uncandid, though well-known essayist ; but would rather feel it a call on those of us who still undertake the more complicated duties, to endeavour by redoubled and persevering exertions, to show, in our deportment, that mean and disingenuous practices are not necessarily associated with our habits :—rather esteem it an additional impulse to exemplify not only the power of knowledge, but another quality which imparts to science its utmost value ; namely—probity in its application.

Considerable efforts have been made of late

years to exclude those who are termed irregular physicians from public appointments, not only in London, but also in the country ; and if the epithet be applicable to a deviation from right conduct, or if incompetency be implied, the exclusion is not merely just, but laudable. But, surely, an individual who has emerged from the more busy occupations of the general practitioner by great industry and talent, and whose unfitness rests alone on his not having been qualified by university graduation, is a far more eligible person for appointments demanding practical knowledge than an inexperienced young man, though invested with the highest collegiate honors. Public appointments of this nature are trusts of great importance, and should only be accessible to men who are both capable of fulfilling, and willing to perform the duty they undertake with integrity and advantage ; but let us not countenance that which has a tendency to discourage or repress the energies of a superior mind struggling against impediments, and yet capable of surmounting them.

The pleasure of gaining increasing competency to alleviate the sufferings of our fellow-creatures will ever prove a powerful incentive to labour, and the individual who duly estimates his interest in the world—who values public opinion, and especially that of his more respectable brethren, will obtain ample recompence

for all his exertions to acquire and diffuse useful information. Toilsome as the formation of studious habits may be, whilst science unfolds some of the richest treasures, and supplies the most exquisite delight that the human mind is capable of realizing, the maintenance of a good system of mental application will carry with it an adequate reward. The range of sciences embraced by medical men is so wide, and the materials for deep research are so diffusive, as to meet the utmost wishes of an expanded or powerful intellect. The frequent interruptions that occur in general practice, and the harassing nature of some of the duties, which certainly are not friendly to a regular series of mental exercises, too often form a pretext for laxity, or limit the literary occupation of leisure seasons to the perusal of journals or other ephemeral works.

The mode of remuneration usually adopted by general practitioners is not only disreputable to themselves, but is derogatory to the interests of their patients; and the period has arrived, in which, owing to more exalted sentiments in society, and to the augmented number of physicians and surgeons, the plan ought to be relinquished. It will not be possible to establish any regular scale of charges, for whilst individuals in affluent or easy circumstances will not object to a proportionate

remuneration, the medical man ought to be accessible to the poorer classes on easy terms. The man of a liberal and humane disposition will be as remote from extortion on the one hand, as from taking a pitiful recompence on the other. He will willingly adapt himself to the condition of his patients, and will cheerfully render unrequited services where suffering and poverty are unhappily combined. It is true that a patient may suffer no personal injury from the redundant medicine, for this can be avoided in the form of administration; but the idea that the advantages expected to result from it are divided between the patient and practitioner renders the former more lax in his attention to a course which, in many cases, demands the strictest punctuality. An unprincipled man, too, has an opportunity of crowding in his supplies most disgracefully, and may impose on the sufferer by an apparently moderate charge on the items, whilst making an extravagant total. It affords a temptation also to misrepresentation, by which the morbid sensibilities of a person may be needlessly excited to secure a reward in medicine, when none was really necessary. These customs might not be repulsive to a man who subsists by trade, and who invites his customer to view the article in which he deals. But the medical man should endeavour to withdraw

from the estimation of his employers every notion of traffic, and lead them to regard the exercise of his judgment as that only for which they offer their compensation. It is both detrimental and degrading to him to connive at the supposition that the fee for his services demands the intervention of physic. I wish to see general practice conducted on efficient and honorable principles, but it cannot be so till this disgraceful custom is abandoned.

Having of late years pretty generally adopted a different course of proceeding, and having heard of others who have done so, I cannot entertain a doubt but that the alteration might readily be effected, and never was there a period more favourable for it than the present. The character and qualifications of the general practitioner are greatly elevated—the public are directed by a more liberal policy—and an impulse to the effort might be derived from the example of other departments in the profession. If noble and generous sentiments actuate the practitioner, he will have little difficulty to encounter in accomplishing the object. Indeed, we may rest assured that, unless the plan be altered, the community, disposed as many of them already are to detest the principle of swallowing a nauseous drug, if perchance it might be merely to reward the apothecary, will direct into other channels the

confidence they have been accustomed to bestow on the general practitioner, at the very period when, in other respects, he is most deserving of that confidence.

Various means have been suggested to carry this mode of remuneration into effect. But I think a family medical attendant will find it necessary to draw out a statement periodically; and so long as tradesmen adopt the practice of sending in their accounts annually, we, perhaps, cannot with propriety do otherwise.

With respect to the manner of making the charge, we must be guided a little by circumstances. The more intelligent part of the community may be satisfied with a line and sum total; and others expecting a detail of the particulars, may be satisfied with an affixed total without the specification of individual charges. Where the charge must be considerable, and where the circumstances chargeable are scattered over an entire year, they are liable to be forgotten, and the practitioner may be suspected of committing a breach of trust. Instead, therefore, of distinguishing the form of medicine, whether mixtures, draughts, pills, etc.; it is preferable to use the terms visit, visit and medicine, medicine, or similar expression, where it may appear requisite to draw out an account; and then to place a sum at the bottom of each page, or a total at the end of the account.

Although the Apothecaries' Company has, undoubtedly, in many respects exercised the power entrusted with it, so as to secure a far better medical education than was generally obtained before, yet commendable as many of its plans and processes might be, the circumstance of being compelled to resort to a trading company for a testimonial of competency, is by no means friendly to the character of a professional man. But, although it must be perceived that the Company is doing good, and though many of its active members are men of considerable reputation, yet every needless badge of trade detracts from the respectability of men who should live by the exercise of knowledge, not by the exchanges of commerce.

It has been thought that the time demanded for preparing medicinals, compounding and dispensing medicines, must inevitably make so great an inroad on the time of the general practitioner, that he can have little leisure for intellectual cultivation. But there is now no occasion for him to prepare his more elaborate articles, because their preparation is accomplished by the company or by the chemist, on an extended scale, with greater accuracy than could be secured by private operations. If he limit himself to the dispensing of what he himself prescribes, and supposing the quantity not to exceed that which is requisite,

he will suffer no disadvantage commensurate with what he gains in having the medicine faithfully compounded under his own inspection.

Viewed under every possible aspect, the general practitioner is called upon to make exertion in the cultivation of science, and in the more respectable modification of his practice. His own interests cannot but suggest, that unless he be pressing onward in the pursuit of knowledge, the reward he has been accustomed to reap, will be withheld. Reputation urges him to redoubled efforts, by pointing out that the standard is raised both by professional and extra-professional judges —and his “good name, better than riches,” will be tarnished, unless he be determined in the noble contest. Science directs to the pleasures she affords, and to the power she confers, as incentives to strenuous exertion ; whilst humanity unfolds to us the multifarious afflictions, and perils, in all the diversities of disease and injury, to which the human body is liable ; sudden or insidious in their occurrence, painful and rapid in their course, and destructive in their tendency, unless prompt and well-directed skill alleviate the suffering, or arrest the progress. If neither a solicitude to mitigate human suffering—nor a love of science—nor a regard for the good

opinion of others—nor even considerations of interest—excite us to close and persevering application in this department of human labour, then we are unworthy of the high trust reposed in us, and confidence would be misplaced. Indeed, if the duties we perform are exacted from us merely as a means of subsistence, and we are incapable of realizing any pleasure in the acquisition of knowledge, and in its subserviency to the noble and important design of benefitting others, as well as ourselves, we shall find it a most unsatisfactory speculation. But, on the other hand, arduous as the duties undoubtedly are, to a man of an active and well-informed mind, who will adopt the motto *labor omnia vincit*, a wide and fertile field is presented. If, however, he do not labour, he will neither merit the esteem, nor secure the influence, nor diffuse the benefits which are at his command. And when a few years more shall have rolled by, and he shall be compelled to retire from active employment, he will not have the satisfaction which the man experiences, who, having sedulously employed his talents, finds himself honored and beloved by a large circle of grateful friends, themselves being the trophies of his success in the useful occupation to which his life has been devoted. Nor can he enjoy the hope, that when his earthly existence shall

terminate, he will leave behind him some proofs that he was not endowed with fine feelings and a powerful understanding in vain. It is truly humiliating to suffer the consciousness of having exercised the rational faculties merely to secure self-gratification and subsistence ; passing a useless and parasitical life, a pensioner on others for resources, whether intellectual, moral, or professional. The man who has exerted his own powers—who has multiplied his resources, and directed them steadily to some valuable end—will not fail of his reward. He will enjoy pleasure in his work—he will secure pleasure in the review of what he has done—and in the hope that he will be survived by those who will be somewhat benefitted by his previous existence. Whilst those who are unsteady in their pursuits—negligent in their habits—who do not provide themselves with the means, nor acquire the capacity, for prompt and independent action, can have no real enjoyment in their work ; nor will they be outlived by the good fruits of their labour. It has justly been said—

“ ————— some when they die, die all—
The space quite closes up through which they pass.”



